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EVENTS

Thursday, Oct. 5

- Save lives, win prizes: **SSMU/ Red Cross Blood Drive**, Shatner Bldg.

• **McGill Students' International Development Initiative** Working groups on Africa, Asia, Latin America. Shatner cafeteria, 18h. Info Mark 844-1530.

• Become an editor for the 1996 issue of *Latitudes*, McGill's journal of developing areas studies, Shatner 435, 17h30.

• **LBGTM** Womyns group discussion meeting, Shatner 423, 18h.

Friday, Oct. 6

• "Consciousness: Not a Function of Cortex Alone" by Yale Psychology Professor John F. Kihlstrom, 15h-16h, Rm. S1/3, Stewart Bio Building. Free

• **LBGTM** Coming Out group meeting in the basement of UTC, 3421 University, 17h30.

• **LBGTM** General Discussion group meeting, basement of UTC, 3421 University, 19h.

• **McGill Christian Fellowship** group meeting, Shatner cafeteria, 19h. Info Jean 848-1720 or Lori 288-8676.

• Gert's Thanksgiving Bash sponsored by **McGill's African Students' Society**. 21h-3h.

Saturday, Oct. 7

• **Vietnamese Students Association** participates in a Lunar Festival, 5309 Côte-des-Neiges, 15h-18h pm. Call 398-9464.

Tuesday, Oct. 10

• **Ensemble**, parent-preschool "drop in" group, at the Unitarian Church, 3415 Simpson (Guy Métro), 9h30-11h30. Call 935-1522.

• "Social Assistance and the Employability of Mothers: Cross-National Comparisons," by McGill Social Work Professor Maureen Baker, 3506 University St., Rm. 103, 12h30-13h30. Call 398-5286.

• Volunteer for **McGill's 175th anniversary** festivities. Information, Rm. 212, Macdonald-Harrington Bldg., 17h. Call 398-5874 or e-mail gallop@conted.lan.mcgill.ca.

• "Recent Advances in AIDS Research: Impact on Cancer and Other Diseases" by McGill Professor Mark A. Wainberg, Leacock 232, 20h.

Wednesday, Oct. 11

• Protest in Ottawa against the federal government's proposed sale of nuclear reactors to China. Call Chris Scott at **QPIRG** for info: 398-7432.

• **Volunteer Bureau** symposium in the Shatner Building.

• Self-Care Day at Health Services, 10h-13h. Information, samples and guests including a masseuse, dermatologist, athletic therapist and dentist. Call 398-2915.

Ongoing

• Bereavement support group for adults, young adults, and men, School of Social Work, 3506 University, Rm. 227. Call Estelle Hopmeyer at 398-7067.

Fuelling stereotypes

Bangladeshi feminist almost speaks on "Female writers in Muslim societies"

If you listen to Bangladeshi feminist writer Taslima Nasrin, Islam is the root of all oppression for Muslim women. Speaking at Concordia's Hall Building a few weeks ago, Nasrin added fuel to the current anti-Muslim feeling sweeping the West.

Of course the question of interpretation of the Qu'ran has nothing to do with sexism in Bangladesh, according to Nasrin. And manipulation of religious texts by the mullahs (Islamic clergy) to serve their own purpose is equally irrelevant.

Nasrin also failed to discuss why there is an outburst of fundamentalism now in Bangladesh instead of, say, 15 years ago. She failed to mention that fundamentalism is predominantly a consequence of political circumstances.

She failed to mention how

Muslim and Hindu fundamentalism were feeding off each other, not just in Bangladesh, but all across South Asia. She was concerned about Islamic fundamentalism but never spoke about the threat posed to Bangladeshi Muslims in Maharashtra, India by Bal Thackeray's Hindu fundamentalist Shiv Sena party.

But then again, Taslima Nasrin wasn't here to discuss all those issues. What she did was convey a specific message: Islamic fundamentalism is a scourge.

Who can deny that Islamic fundamentalism exists? But so does Hindu, Christian and Jewish fundamentalism.

Nasrin also has a rather skewed vision of feminism. Throughout the lecture it was unclear exactly which women in Bangladesh Nasrin was speaking about. She spoke about women who were imprisoned in their

homes because of Islamic law, reduced to "trophy wives" by their husbands and society.

Because of their status as show pieces, women are denied access to education and access to the media, continued Nasrin.

This is true of wealthy women in many societies, but could only be applied to all women in Bangladeshi society in the absence of class analysis. All women do not have the luxury of staying home to work — rather than being forced to stay at home, many women are actually forced into the lowest paying sectors of the economy.

Even the topic indicates that Nasrin is dealing with a specific class of Bangladeshi women, since 70 per cent of the population is illiterate and is probably not concerned with academic issues of representation.

The danger with the opinions that Nasrin expresses should have been immediately obvious to anyone who was in that auditorium when she spoke.

By branding Islam responsi-

ble for the social status of Bangladeshi women, Nasrin has fed into the current Western fad of demonising all things Muslim.

Furthermore, Nasrin displays a complete lack of respect for Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab by denying the validity of their choice.

In Nasrin's analysis the veil is never chosen. She therefore sets up an unfortunate paradigm, in which Muslim women are victims even if they choose to wear the hijab, and are only free when they abandon it for the "liberating" Western fashion of high heels and short skirts.

The danger of her words was obvious by simply watching the dynamics between Muslims and non-Muslims in the audience. Nasrin's words fell like manna from heaven on the ears of mainstream feminists who wish to erase all race and class discourse from feminist theory. Nasrin, a non-white woman, was asking the West to "rescue" the Muslim world from itself.

Listening to Nasrin it is easy to forget that "secular" Turkey's Western allies are more or less silent about Turkish military persecution of Kurds. As though imposition of western cultural norms are the solution to internal problems around the world.

It therefore became alright for white people to shout down every non-white man who ap-

proached the microphone to challenge her, because everyone knows that Muslim men are sexist simply because they are Muslim. Just ask Taslima Nasrin.

The moderator tolerated no criticism of her from those (Muslim men and women who opposed her) who were directly affected by her statements. The moderator, rather than being a facilitator of discussion, was a human shield against criticism. When the occasional unpleasant question got through, Nasrin's only defense was irrelevant vagueness.

No one who has any human decency can deny that the fatwa placed on Nasrin is unjust. Yes, Islamic fundamentalism is a threat, especially to people living in societies where mullah influence is strong.

But the way Nasrin presented the issue was nonsense, catering to stereotypes of Eastern despotism. A shame, really, because Islamic fundamentalism has managed to threaten and in extreme cases silence people.

Everyone has the right to speech. Unfortunately Nasrin should spend more time criticising the people in power who ordered the fatwa, rather than belittling the beliefs of the people whom she claims to represent.

MELANIE NEWTON
HASAN KARRAR

HYDE PARK

I am extremely concerned by the decision made at the last SSMU Council meeting (Monday, October 2nd) to attempt to pull the plug on the undergrad funding for the McGill Daily by putting a question to referendum.

A small group of disgruntled young conservatives, tired of the fact that the Daily is constantly calling them and their political "leaders" to task for the deeply entrenched system of privilege and exclusion that they espouse, somehow got the SSMU exec on side (I wonder how...?) and succeeded in railroading it through the special Council meeting.

In a choice piece of doublespeak-politicking, im-

mediately after the SSMU Pres had spoken to the issue saying that they were herein serving democracy by letting the students decide for themselves, the very next person on the speakers' list called the question to a vote, thus shutting down any real debate on the issue — and neatly sidestepping democracy in the process.

Make no mistake, this is about democracy but not in the sense that the Daily's detractors say. The Daily Publications Society (DPS) has editorial autonomy in order to protect it from precisely this type of ideological ravaging. These conservatives, the ones who say that they have "...no input into the Daily..." know perfectly well that they

do indeed have as much input as they want.

The DPS is a democratic organisation in which every member (ie: every student on campus) has equal control over the editorial content. All they have to do is go to the meetings and participate.

That is the problem for these people. This type of participatory democracy is a nasty inconvenience from their perspective. They much prefer the heavy-handed brow-beating type of political power they are used to wielding. So, the only part of the Daily that they can thus beat up on is the funding from SSMU members, and this is what they have focused on.

Luckily for us, and for the sake of open debate on McGill campuses, it seems that a pretty straightforward decision of the SSMU Judicial Board will rule the whole process unconstitutional and the referendum question will be dropped, at least until the next ravage from the right!

All of this is not to say that I blindly support the Daily. They make mistakes, as we all do, but from the standpoint of freedom of the press at McGill (especially!), the Daily is a necessary publication and certainly more than worthy of our support and encouragement.

WHO'S AFRAID OF PARTICIPA-

TORY DEMOCRACY

AN OPINION SUBMITTED BY

STEPHEN TARGETT

PRESIDENT, MCGILL POST-

GRADUATE STUDENTS'

SOCIETY (PGSS)

In any situation where a body of elected officials purports to act on behalf of an electorate, there must exist a forum through which these acts can be critically appraised. At McGill, that forum is the Daily.

The Daily and SSMU are by nature antithetical because the one exists to expose the inner machinations of the other. Without the Daily, every McGill student would have to accept at face value what SSMUers tell us they are doing.

Considering the size of SSMU's budget (and the greater possible financial fuck-ups with your money), \$6.70 is a small price to pay in return for the accountability of SSMU.

The burden of proof is on the anti-Dailyites to show why the Daily ought not to exist. Hiding behind calls for referenda fails to conceal certain persons' right-wing agendas. Are you afraid of telling your public about your secret Preston Manning fetishes?

THOMAS WHITE
ARTS U2

Ed note: Garry Bernstein of McGill Telecom wrote to the Daily concerning the story "Open your wallets: McGill Telecom runs phone monopoly at residences". Since the letter is over 300 words, it cannot be run in its entirety. Students wishing a copy of the letter can come to the Daily office, Shatner B-03, for a copy.

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Whale Music

by Kevin Siu

Before Whale, guitarist Henrik Schyffert was a member of a theatre company in Stockholm. One of the company's better-known routines involved one of the members, whose name was coincidentally Kevin Shields, juggling cottage cheese - out of the container, of course - while lip-synching his favourite My Bloody Valentine song, "Soon." That this was televised on national Swedish television may say something about Swedes in general but, to be sure, it speaks volumes about Whale.

Unlikely, Whale has taken the best elements of the Sugarcubes - quirkiness, unpredictability, and an unusual female singer who sounds like an alien pod child - and added distorted guitars, shuffle beats and space sounds. And they're making people listen to it. The cryptically titled "Hobo Humpin' Slobo Babe" went into regular rotation on MuchMusic and singer Cia Berg almost made braces cool (almost). Perhaps some of the pop music intelligentsia have dismissed Whale as a novelty act one-hit wonder, but then some of the aforementioned are elitist party-poopers more concerned about the scene than the music itself.

The British music press has already classified Whale as part of the 'emerging' Swedish scene (as if Swedes only discovered how to play music recently). However, the link between such acts as Whale, the Wannadies and the Cardi-



Whale lead singer Cia Berg

gans, nationality aside, is tenuous. Henrik is somewhat bemused by the

Well, we're not British, and that's good. Also, we've got better taste . . .

attention of the British press and attempts, half-jokingly, to explain any underlying connection between apparently disparate bands.

"Well, we're not British and that's

good. Also, we've got better taste, better than the Danish and the German, too. You know, there's more to Sweden than Roxette, Ace of Base, and Yaki-Da."

Indeed, Whale's debut, *We Care*, sounds nothing like Ace of Base, as Cia, Henrik and bass player Gordon Cyrus slide casually between laid-back, spare beats and up-tempo, heavy rhythms, sometimes in the same song. The album was released more than a year after "Hobo Humpin' Slobo Babe," because

the band had not anticipated the response to the single.

"It was the first song we ever wrote," Henrik explains "and we had no idea about the popularity; in Sweden, we live in a bubble. We were suddenly asked by the record company to record an entire album. Instead of making an album in 33 days, we decided to do it properly."

On stage, bolstered by three more musicians and friends, Whale is a wonderfully peculiar spectacle, mocking every rock posture invented while introducing a few of its own. Singer Cia even plays a Bontempi organ during one song, which

Pirate, astronaut, rock star . . .

would conjure images of dour New Order playing "Your Silent Face" if Gordon weren't leaping on monitors and doing belly rolls for the benefit of the audience. Only the most loyal Blur fan would deny that Whale out-played and out-entertained the headliners. On its first North American tour, Whale is "too young, too thrilled" to have anything but fun on stage. Besides, this is what the band has been working towards.

"Pirate, astronaut, rock star," Henrik muses, "that's what I wanted to be when I grew up. Only, I'm colour-blind, so I can't be an astronaut, and I'm saving piracy for retirement."



American Town
by Dave Ryther

Off the darkroom floor . . .



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² McGill Reporter

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The Student Aid Office is pleased to announce the continuation of the Work Study Program for the 1995-96 academic year! In addition to our regular funding, the Science Undergraduate Society has made a special contribution to the Work Study Program to create new positions in the Faculty of Science for science students.

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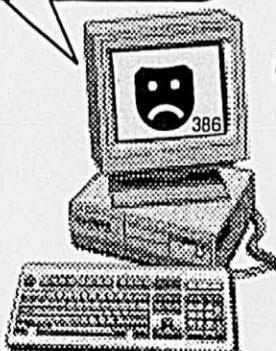
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Sex, power and perversion

McGill's Players Theatre presents Mamet-Mania

by Rebecca McKechnie

Imagine. Your evening starts out mundanely, in the office of a university professor. Slowly, with intensifying conversation, great emotions arise to produce fiery conflict and, in so much as an hour's time, a simple struggle to gain understanding has turned into a setting of sex, sleaze and perversion.

This is not a crazy nightmare/fantasy (your choice), but rather an idea of what to expect at the Player's Theatre double bill, featuring the plays *Oleanna* and *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, by David Mamet.

Mamet is the author of such works as *Speed the Plow*, *American Buffalo*, and *Glengarry Glen Ross*, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize in Drama.

The appeal of Mamet's work lies in the fact that the "dialogue and words he chooses are exact representations of the way people talk," says Harry Crane, director of *Sexual Perversity*.

"His dialogue is full of life, yet contains subtextual elements," explains Crane, adding "he reveals the strong primal emotions people have, which are fundamental to society."

But Jennifer Campbell, director of *Oleanna*, says she was not immediately attracted to Mamet's work. "He really gets into the seediness of his characters, and you cannot help wondering what his position is," she says. However, Campbell was struck by the "brilliant writing" in *Oleanna* and she has tried to veer away from Mamet's conventional theme of masculine power.

The double bill could be a social studies paper: back-to-back performances dealing with contrasting ideologies. One play focuses on a student-teacher conflict, where feminine subjection is centre stage. The other concentrates on the male-female relationship in a sexually distorted society. The truths in each are evident.

The plays parallel each other in their examination of corrupted relationships and "the difficulty we have in our attempt to reach out to other people, which we are unable to do because of the brutish conditioning of Western Culture," states Crane. It is this precise miscommunication that creates the dynamics in both performances.

Mamet's true-to-life style brings out the voyeur in all of us.



One cannot help feeling intrigued by "the foray into these character's lives at break-neck speed." That is the function of a play, what makes it an optimal alternative to a movie. "It is visual impact. A rapid fire succession of scenes," says Crane. As well, a live performance offers "intensity, interaction and emotion for the viewer," states Campbell.

This is evident in *Oleanna*, as it takes shape in a meeting between John, a university professor (James McGowan) and Carol,

a student, (Leslie Sellers) to discuss her failing grade. What transpires is a series of discussions which deal initially with a minor problem but escalate to cause serious turmoil for the two characters.

Campbell stresses that she wanted "the actors to work with each other to make the performance as real as possible." Being that these are the only characters in the play, this chemistry is of the utmost importance.

Without a doubt, the characters of John and Carol are conceivably real. Their relationship is provokingly maddening. We must constantly ask why things are happening, to "search for the truth of the situation," emphasises Campbell.

The truth is a controversy in and of itself. It is actually our understanding of what has taken place. We must use our own judgements to go beyond the distorted communication between John and Carol.

Campbell's mandate of bringing out the professor's vices is not overwhelming. He is, arguably, more subjected to Carol's compulsive personality and therefore pushed to act the way he does. This is exactly what Campbell wants to repress, but Mamet's dialogue is too brilliant to be overridden by any such stage directions.

In *Sexual Perversity*, Mamet's characters are functioning in "a modern society that has sadly mutated and eroded the most natural of instincts, love, and

left us with the most barren and hollow of drives," explains Crane. The director is attempting to bring out "the tragedy of our society through these characters. They are alienated from themselves, their friends, and lovers as a result of Western Culture."

This synopsis is not blatant in the performance. The characters in *Sexual Perversity* interact to bring this alienation to the forefront, but cannot fulfill the idea to its potential. The masculinity of the setting is much too powerful to let any objectionable feminine statements be validated.

Bernard Litko (Giuseppe Calvini) is the principle character, who exhausts the pick-up line, exemplifies crudeness and, Crane contends, is the portrayal of "males as moronic buffoons."

No doubt, this character will strike a chord with both sexes. Crane says that "some may be offended by this, but every man has Berny in them. They just

rent vogue of trying to shock people," Crane adds. And sure enough, it has.

While the directors' central objectives are not fully achieved, they do succeed in stimulating the audience. The humorous and contentious themes in *Sexual Perversity* and the climactic plot of *Oleanna* are guaranteed to make an evening of fortified coffee-talk. Do not hesitate to embark on such an experience.

Tickets for students are \$6 for both shows or \$5 for one. *Oleanna* is playing at 7:00 Tues. Oct 3-Sat. Oct 7, and *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* follows at 9:00 in the Shatner Theatre. From Tues. Oct 10-Sat. Oct. 14 the performances are in opposite slots. Call 398-6813 for more information.



rarely let that side come to the surface."

"[Although] this play was written two decades ago, contemporary audiences can still find it entertaining, or offensive. It has surpassed that cur-

Making it personal

Workgroup gets first year seminars through Senate

By Jacqueline Reis

McGill University, home of Leacock 132 and 600-student classes, will soon count first year seminars among its course offerings.

Senate adopted the Guidelines for Implementation of First Year Seminars as presented by a workgroup of its Academic Policy and Planning Committee on Sept. 27. Four hundred first year students from the faculties of Arts and Science will be able to enroll in one 20-member seminar each as early as next fall.

The Guidelines claim the seminars will improve undergraduate education at McGill by making it more personal, encouraging students to think and discuss issues critically and familiarising students with academic customs early in their university careers. "This is the ideal way to teach," said workgroup member Janet Donald of the Centre for University Teaching and Learning.

"First year students did not appear to understand really how difficult the learning task was... They aren't aware that learning in a university can be much more difficult than it was before," said Donald.

"So part of the reason for first year seminars... [A] is to provide students with an intellectual challenge... and B) closer contact with professors; and C) some way of understanding

what the university task is, what the learning task is," she concluded.

The guidelines call for 20 three-credit First Year seminars to be established on an experimental basis for five years. The seminars can be taken as a program requirement or an elective, in which case students may be graded on a satisfactory/un-satisfactory basis.

The seminars will be taught by permanent professors, whose departments "are urged to re-structure course offerings and re-distribute teaching loads," according to the Guidelines.

This may be easier said than done, given the heavy course loads of many professors, already limited course offerings and university-wide budget cuts.

"Our problem is, of course, we're struggling with terrible budget cuts," said Donald.

"It [the Guidelines] is before the departmental committees. It is clear that there won't be immediate and overwhelming enthusiasm, and that I can guarantee, but whether in the end we'll be able to do it is an open question," said workgroup member Nicholas deTakacsy, associate dean of the Faculty of Science.

DeTakacsy confirmed that it would be hard to implement the seminars in his Faculty because of its relatively rigid program requirements, but added that "At the moment, I'm still really optimistic."

Eric Hoffstein, a Students'

Society representative on the workgroup, started the ball rolling for first year seminars last year. He cited a conversation with Alex Usher, last year's political research information co-ordinator at the Students' Society, as the start of the process.

"We spoke a lot last year, and right at the beginning of last year he was showing me this paper on this program that U. of T. had started... So I followed up on it," said Hoffstein.

Registration for next year's first year seminars will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Other Senate briefs:

Code of Student Conduct to be revised

Senate approved a motion from the Appeal Committee for Student Discipline and Grievances to strike a committee to modify parts of the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures and the Revised Code of Student Grievance Procedures.

The document presented by Robert MacKenzie, chair of the Appeal Committee, listed problems such as discrepancies between the two codes, the codes' neglect of some issues, and the fact that "Current procedures regarding appeals to decisions on student discipline are not consistent with our standards of natural justice," making some procedures unjust and difficult to defend before a court of law should someone appeal a ruling externally.

FATHER KNOWS BEST



by Gail Belvett

The father-son relationship is shrouded in mystery precisely because it is the supposed source of an equally mysterious and cryptic entity: manhood. The importance of this rite of passage, while still very much a part of several cultural and religious communities, seems to have been on the decline since the time "when men were men."

The issue of manhood is extremely topical in the Black community; too many Black men are incarcerated or victims of violent crime, too few of them are in American universities or working.

This crisis is said to have external and internal causes: the Black man has become public enemy number one — the main target of societal racism and discrimination. Within the African-American community, all accounts, reports, and statistics point the finger at the high number of absentee fathers and overall lack of positive male role models as primary contributors to the current state of the Black man.

John Edgar Wideman is adding his voice to the long list of men and women trying to formalise the importance of the enigmatic father-son bond. The paperback edition of his book: *Fatheralong: A Meditation on Fathers and Sons, Race and Society* was released last month.

The book is not unique in its construction. Wideman had a stereotypical relationship with his father: Daddy was the provider and assuch, rarely at home. His father maintained an emotional distance from his children; he was revered and loved but nevertheless a stranger in the house.

Where Wideman's mother offered him a tangible, living, breathing love, his father "evoked boundaries." As he ages, has children of his own and enters a stage of introspection, Wideman seeks to define

FATHERALONG: A MEDITATION ON FATHERS AND SONS, RACE AND SOCIETY

his relationship with his father in an attempt to solve the puzzle of himself.

And so Wideman and his father take the proverbial journey together: to South Carolina for what is ostensibly a search for his ancestors, but truly Wideman's search for his father.

Clearly, Wideman's challenge is to make this old and cliché framework of self-discovery new. He begins with a mini-dissertation on "race" for he cannot fully understand, nor analyse his relationship with his father without first exploring and defining the role that race and racism has played in shaping his paternal relationship.

What ensues is the parsing of this paradigm of race, exposing the brutal and relentless ways in which race and society dictate the nature of the relationship between black men and their sons. His conclusion is grim: "[The US], as it presently functions, stands between black fathers and sons, impeding communication, frustrating development, killing or destroying the minds of young men, short-circuiting the natural process of growth, maturity, the cycle of generations."

The layout of the book works well, largely due to Wideman's writing style. His language is engrossing: mainly academic, peppered with everyday colloquialisms—blue notes—not only adding texture to the prose, but also taking the exclusionary edge off his more formal writing.

Fatheralong is still a difficult read because of Wideman's use of metaphor. He relies heavily on the connotative power of words and images; he exploits everything from adolescent dress to racial epithets for their symbolic meaning. However, the

richness and evocative power of Wideman's writing is well worth the time required to peel back the layers of metaphor.

His comments are a series of musings, at times evolving into each other, at other times with no obvious connection between them. Wideman, however, makes seemingly obvious digressions relevant to his main point: If I want to know who I am, I must understand my father.

Is the father-son bond so revealing? Would a better relationship with his father have precluded this current middle-age angst? For what would a Black father give to his son more than the ability to recognize and combat the manifestations of the racism inherent in his society? More than a respect and knowledge of his history, his forebears?

How would this differ from what a Black father would want to pass on to his young black daughters, from what a mother would want to teach her children? Can we buy into Wideman's idealisation of the paternal bond without filling young Black mothers with a sense of inadequacy and guilt for the single-parent environment in which she is raising her sons?

Fatheralong left me with far more questions than it answered, although I don't believe that Wideman intended this book to be a guide to fatherhood. I'm a fan of his writing, albeit wary of his writings. Perpetrating the notion that a good father-son relationship is necessary for a Black man's success is dangerous in that it provides at best a mere band-aid and at worst a convenient scapegoat for the multilayered problems presently facing young Black males.

By Michael Moss and Nabil Yanni

Noam Chomsky will not be remembered as a man of few words. By the end of Tuesday evening, every ounce of time allotted to both his speech and to the question period had been exhausted.

Chomsky was greeted by a densely packed crowd as he made an unceremonious entrance into Leacock 132 last Tuesday. He wasted no time in getting down to business. Nor did he disappoint. At the outset, people were literally sitting at his feet, empty vessels waiting to be filled with his matter-of-fact wisdom. But many more people were just as unceremoniously turned away after patiently waiting long hours in line.

Aside from being a major force in the study of theoretical linguistics (which he currently teaches at MIT), Chomsky is also recognised as a formidable political thinker. His speech, entitled "The New World Order - New or Old?", capped off a series of lectures presented by Black Rose Books, Chomsky's chief Canadian publisher, to mark their 25th anniversary.

The fact that multitudes of people were turned away is less a reflection of Chomsky's popularity than of his ideas, namely that the good things in life are reserved for the privileged few. Granted, there was some last minute scrambling to provide extra accommodation for the overflow crowd, but the fact is that there was no good reason to keep them waiting in line in the first place.

So in fairness to those who waited in vain, the Daily will herein supply a glossary of terms frequently employed by Chomsky in his speech. The point is to shed some light on Chomsky's personal vocabulary which consists of normal words being subjected to unorthodox interpretations.

Chomsky opened his speech with the question: "Where is the U.S.A. [and the industrial world] being driven by conscious social planning?" The key word here is "conscious," because Chomsky never stopped emphasising the point that policy-making is the result of intentional strategy.

This U.S. policy can best be captured in the catchphrase "to protect the opulent few from the majority." This wasn't Chomsky's idea; in fact, it was advocated by James Madison, the principal architect of the American Constitution. As you might imagine, the "opulent minority" is drawn from the ranks of the business elite, while what remains is pretty much the

general populace. So elementary is this concept to Chomsky that he thinks it should be part of basic learning by the third grade.

But this is to be expected from Chomsky, whose penchant for repeating lines like "it's obvious," "it's well known" and "it's perfectly easy to understand" are features common to both his speeches and his books. But in the end he's right: the way big business clamps down on the rights of workers, the suppression of liberal independent voices, the massive cuts in social spending contrasted with funding for high-tech industries bloated with capital, and the general depravity of the times sit there right in front of our faces.

Digression aside, here are some of the words you are likely to see posted in the **New Order** (quotations are Chomsky's own words):

conservative: Once a term used to bestow praise, now it means "the precise opposite of traditional conservatism." Now it masquerades under the banner of restoring "family values," when in fact the conservative right is the real agent behind the destruction of these values.

The right is the main instrument of a sustained attack begun nearly 20 years ago to crush any trace of a welfare state.

democracy: "A system in which decisions are made by sectors of the business community and related elites."

economic health: "Economic health is a technical term that has nothing to do with the health of the economy."

liberal: The "L" word refers to a dying breed of social activist. Incidentally, Chomsky sees himself as an anarchist. The word liberal currently has a much broader meaning since the right slaps it onto anyone who doesn't conform to their standards. It's also been drained of any elements of socialism.

MIT: Not only Chomsky's employer, but also an example used by him to show how public spending gets funneled into the hands of the rich. The opulent minority wants tons of money pumped into research for high tech industries. Somewhat similar to McGill.

president: War criminal. Chomsky thinks there is reasonable grounds to convict every U.S. president since World War II of war crimes.

roll back: A term used to describe the hostile reaction by the opulent minority against hard-won human rights.

terrorism: Or the U.S.A. To

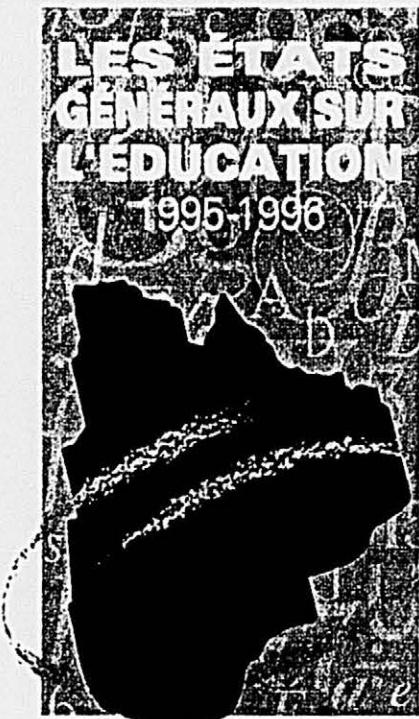
MSKY-SPEAK:

A translation for the uninitiated

anyone who's read Chomsky, it comes as no surprise that he condemns the U.S. as a terrorist nation. From training death squads in El Salvador to the invasion of Panama, Chomsky has debunked the myth of America as global defender of democracy. Not that Canada, with its involvement in East Timor, can plead a guiltless conscience either.

total disaster: A popular euphemism of Chomsky's for the Third World and Latin America as beneficiaries of U.S. aid.

Wall Street Journal: The object of much of Chomsky's scorn and ridicule. It relishes in reporting facts like the 60 per cent raise in CEO salaries between 1980-1993.



by Jonathan Richert

"We would like to express our support for the concept of a broad and forward-looking review of the Québec education system."

With that, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) introduced its report for the *Etats généraux sur l'éducation*, prepared on behalf of the approximately 17 000 undergraduate students of McGill University. The report, presented to council by SSMU VP External Nick Benedict, received unanimous support from councillors last Monday.

Initiated by the Parti Québécois to conduct "a fundamental re-examination of the Québec education system from the kindergarten to the university level," the *Etats généraux* has been gathering public input since last April.

Next week the travelling commission will be in Montréal to listen to students and student associations, including SSMU. The *Etats généraux*'s final report is scheduled to be presented by June, 1996.

THE FUTURE OF QUÉBEC EDUCATION

SSMU prepares
its report for the
Etats généraux

Students were invited to contribute to the formulation of SSMU's position paper, although only seven people attended the open consultative forum held on September 28. These included the three committee members, two other members of the SSMU executive, and two members-at-large.

Benedict estimates that a "maximum of thirty people" contributed in total, but he was not discouraged.

"Given that we only had three weeks to organize the forum after Frosh Week, I'm quite pleased with the contributions we received," he said.

Listen up PQ: SSMU suggests...

In its report, SSMU considered issues such as funding and accessibility to the university system as a whole, as well as academic and administrative issues.

"There is a strong consensus among students that we must ensure that our universities are financially accessible. This is intrinsically important to social mobility," said Benedict in the report he will present to the *Etats généraux* next week.

The principle of equality of opportunity demands that where a university degree is the prerequisite to certain categories of financial success... that everyone be given an equal

chance to pursue it," he continued.

The report notes that accessibility can be promoted in a number of ways. Adequate funding should come from those who benefit from the university system, which Benedict identified as corporations, graduates and society as a whole.

"We would not like to see a blind corporate tax applied. Many corporations are already involved in job-training, through targeted donations, internships, or their own programmes," argues Benedict in the committee report.

One proposal considered by the committee was the implementation of a graduate tax, to be levied upon former students who have graduated and are working. Benedict explained that this tax would take the form of an incremental tax on income earned, so students who are earning a lower income after graduation would not be required to pay the tax immediately.

"This is one possible solution, and we are merely presenting it for consideration," said Benedict.

He acknowledged, however, that the implementation of this tax would be "tricky."

He admitted that a grad tax could create another disincentive for students considering post-secondary education who are already discouraged by the

costs of repaying student loans — and the interest they incur until the moment repayment begins — upon graduation.

"When we are presenting [to the *Etats généraux*] next week, we won't be pushing for a graduate tax," said Benedict.

"If students want me to push for it, I will, because it's personally something that I believe in," he said.

The report will lobby the Québec government to resist the temptation to pass along the federal funding cuts of the Canada Health and Social Transfer — amounting to \$7 billion over the next two years — to users of education health and welfare systems.

The report calls instead for the provincial government to "treat these cuts as losses in general revenue, as New Brunswick and Saskatchewan have already announced that they will do."

Adequate public funding of universities is absolutely essential if the direct costs of education for students are to be minimized. Increasing tuition, affirms the SSMU, would certainly form a barrier to accessibility for many students with fewer financial resources.

In this light, the report examined the provincial loans and grants system as a means for students to attend university, noting that "grants are much more useful than loans in promoting accessibility."

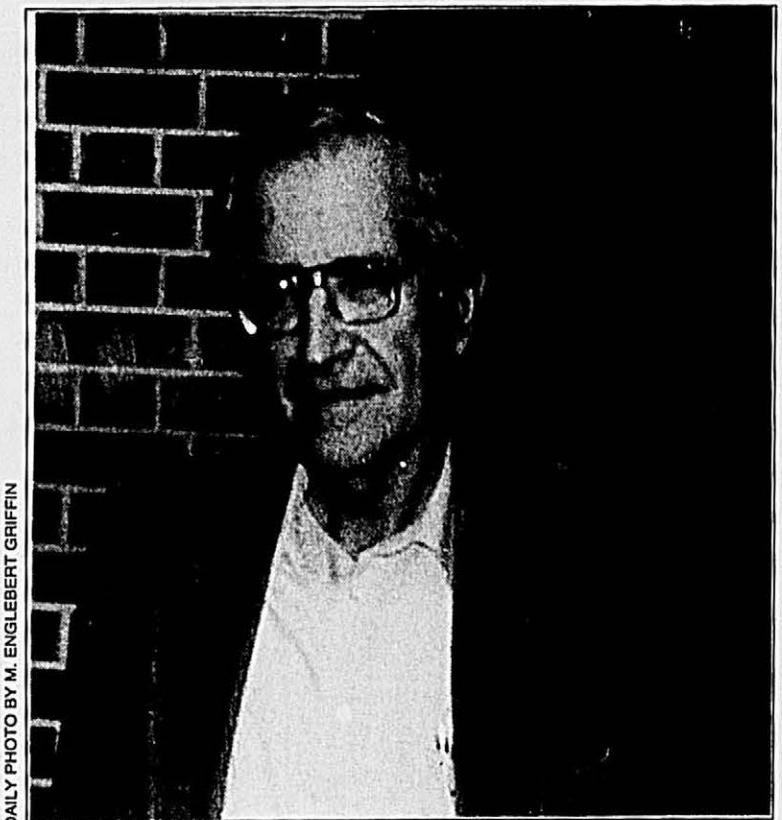
The report also called attention to the drawbacks of the current system, in which many students are denied financial aid because of their parents' resources — even if their parents are not contributing directly to their education.

It criticized the government's refusal to provide aid to part-time students, especially in light of the increasing number of workers who find it necessary to return to university for retraining during their careers.

On the academic side, the SSMU report did not have many suggestions in the area of curriculum improvements. But it did urge the Québec Ministry of Education to facilitate credit transfers and the sharing of resources between universities.

But Benedict rejected proposals, such as that recently released by McGill Principal Bernard Shapiro, to transform universities into private or "semi-private" institutions.

"If the Ministry of Education wants to remain involved in the development of the university system — and from a public policy standpoint it is difficult to see how it could abdicate this responsibility — it must provide the necessary funding. The introduction of private or 'semi-private' universities would signal a failure and an absence of leadership," Benedict concluded in the report.



DAILY PHOTO BY M. ENGLEBERT GRIFFIN

OCTOBER 5-11 OCTOBRE 1995

THE MCGILL DAILY culture



ATTENTION: ARTS, SCIENCE & EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

VERIFICATION PERIOD

**OCTOBER 16 TO 20, 1995
9:30 AM TO 4:30 PM**

Please take this opportunity to check your entire McGill record and make any corrections. Return forms to your Student Affairs Office ONLY if you are making changes or if you are a U3 student "expecting to graduate" this year.

DON'T FORGET TO KEEP A COPY!

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EDUCATION*:

LOBBY OF EDUCATION BUILDING, 3700 McTavish
*** Phys Ed students, go to Currie Gym, Rm 215**



Association des Étudiant-e-s
Diplômé-e-s Employé-e-s de McGill

agsem

Association of Graduate Students
Employed at McGill

Attention all T.A.'s:

The AGSEM General Assembly will be held Thursday, October 12 at 6:00pm in the Thomson House Ballroom. Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

Agenda:

1. Call to order
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Minutes of previous meeting (March 23rd 1995)
4. Bargaining report
5. Mobilisation report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Questions of officers
8. Elections to Co-ordinating Committee
9. Resolutions
 - 9.1 Amendments to the constitution
10. Any other business
11. Adjournment

Room 12, Suite 2401, 2020 University Street, Montréal, Québec, H3A 2A5
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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
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PRESENT

RAJMOHAN GANDHI

"CONFLICT OF CULTURES: THE STORY OF SOUTH ASIA"

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1995
3:00-5:00 PM

ROOM 217
OTTO MAASS CHEMISTRY BUILDING
(Corner of Sherbrooke St. & University Ave.)

About the Speaker: Rajmohan Gandhi is the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and a leading commentator on political and social issues. Mr. Gandhi has written a number of books on contemporary India. He is currently in Canada as the Shastri Institute's Distinguished Visiting Fellow.

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Time: 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Place: 1550 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West
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REAL EDUCATION FOR THE REAL WORLD

Youths learn about AIDS

SIDA Jeunes Tour raises awareness

by Christine Birbalsingh

DAILY PHOTO BY LUCY ATKINSON

Everyday there are four new cases of people contracting the HIV virus in Québec. In response to this growing problem, two Montréal-based organisations, L'anonyme and Les productions virage, hosted an AIDS awareness event at the Québec National Library.

According to Francine de Guise, organisational adviser for Virage, the event was a significant way "to sensitise people about AIDS and those who live with AIDS, to break down the prejudices, and to let the people express their fears in face of HIV and those who have HIV."

Throughout the summer and fall, L'anonyme and Virage have combined efforts to produce three such events, known collectively as the SIDA Jeunes Tour. The two previous shows were held in parks, one in the Gay Village and one in Plateau Mont Royal.

Both L'anonyme and Virage deal with many social problems such as unemployment, youths dropping out of school, multiculturalism, and drug abuse. Because L'anonyme is an organisation that provides many services to young people, its co-ordinators wanted to involve young people in raising awareness about AIDS and HIV as well. L'anonyme was first part of La fondation des enfants maltraités, but in September 1990 received a new mandate to "sensitise the population to the realities of young people," explains Marie Claude Fournier, a social worker at L'anonyme.

Since then, the organisation has been found driving a caravan through eight districts in Montréal, offering a number of services — from information about health and nutrition to accompanying youths to clinics — to youths regardless of their personal situations. With a nurse on board, many health prob-

lems can be dealt with straight away.

Apart from the caravan, L'anonyme's office also offers services such as group talks, counseling, and a telephone help line. Their aim, according to Fournier, is to "create a good connection with young people, to be there and to listen." With 8 611 requests for help in 1994, they must be doing something right.

Despite the continuing focus on young people at the SIDA Jeunes tours, the events have been open to the general public. At the final event, information tables with pamphlets and free condoms welcomed the public in the foyer. About 125 people then flowed into the auditorium where a video was presented about an 18-year-old woman coping with HIV.

The evening then progressed into a dialogue between three HIV-infected guests and the audience. The three men, Jean-Charles, François, and Yves talked about how they contracted HIV and how they subsequently dealt with it physically and psychologically. Jean-Charles spoke about having to take 21 pills a day and the side effects of doing this, such as vomiting and diarrhea.

Youths who had previously been helped by L'anonyme and Virage assisted with the evening's organisation. Annie, a youth who had previously been helped with an abortion by L'anonyme, gave the welcome speech.

The evening was co-hosted by Fournier and Guy Favreau, L'anonyme's director. Acting as the event's Honorary President was Dr. Rejean Thomas, special counselor for the International Humanitarian Action of Quebec and clinic doctor.

Suazo was the first in two fatal police shootings this summer, adding up to a total of



Justice for Suazo

Protesters march against police brutality

by Anup Grewal

More than 100 marchers protested last Sunday against police complicity in the fatal June police shooting of Montrealer Martin Suazo.

The march was a response to the statement made by the Sécurité du Québec last week that Michel Garneau, the officer responsible for the shooting, would not face any accusations.

"Shouting 'Police! Faciste! [Québec Security Minister Serge] Ménard complice!', the marchers gathered in front of Station 33, where Garneau works.

Pearl Carrington of the Comité sans emploi centre Montréal, one of the three groups in charge of organising the demonstration, decried the actions of Garneau and other police officers: "What this is is a so-called effective gun in the hands of a defective mind."

Last May, Montréal urban police officers chased Suazo — a Canadian of Puerto Rican descent — down St. Laurent Boulevard after he was caught shoplifting. While Suazo was pinned to the ground, Garneau "accidentally" killed Suazo when the police officer's gun went off.

Demanding that there be a "serious inquiry" into the Suazo case, Carrington said, "We have lost faith in the present day court system. There is too much conflict of interest between the po-

lice and the [judicial] system." "We demand a special unit independent of the police, under the direction of a retired judge and a retired prosecutor reporting directly to the Attorney General in any case concerning involvement of the police," continued Carrington.

"As officers of Station 33 looked on in silence, Alexandre Popovik of the Groupe défense des g e n s e c h o e d Carrington's views. "The police reflect in their actions their most reactionary prejudices," he said.

"They're against every sort of people who are marginalised in society: the homeless, coloured people, poor people, gay and lesbians and punks and street kids," remarked Popovik.

Dan Phillips of the League des noirs du Québec said that Montréalers have to fight the police system which is a "racist, sexist and armed" institution.

The three organisations will be holding similar demonstrations for Ferraro and Romenelli. Both will be conducted under the same concept — going to the station of the police officer(s) responsible for the shooting.

For more information on the whereabouts of the upcoming demonstrations call La Comité des sans emploi centre Montréal at 596-7094.



OCTOBER 5-11 1995

THE MCGILL DAILY culture

11

FOGEL-SABOURIN PRESENTS	
the	Black List
FRI	EDWYN COLLINS
6 OCT + MODERN STORIES	CLUB SODA
9:00	9:00
FRI	6 FILTER
OCT + EVERCLEAR	LE SPECTRUM
9:00	9:00
SUN	8 SPIRITUALIZED
OCT + POLARAPOLIS	CAFÉ CAMPUS
8:00	8:00
TUE	10 GANG OF FOUR
OCT + DRILLÉE	ELECTRIQUES
9:00	9:00
SAT	14 JOHN WETTON
OCT CLUB SODA	9:00
WED	18 BABES IN TOYLAND
OCT + ASH + DUMPSTER JUICE	ELECTRIQUES
8:30	8:30
SUN	22 GENE
OCT + MENTHOL	CLUB SODA
8:30	8:30
SUN	29 CHRIS ISAAK
OCT + THE WALLFLOWERS	METROPOLIS
8:30	8:30
THU	2 THE BAND UTOPIA
FRANK ZAPPA'S MUSICIANS PLAY ZAPPA	LE SPECTRUM
NOV 830	830
TICKETS AT BOX OFFICES AND ADMISSION	790-1245
Fogel Sabourin	Black

Savage yet tender, NOMEANSNO?

by Jay McCoy

Paradox and logic, society and the individual, tongue in cheek. Yes, it's NOMEANSNO. For 15 years, the Wright Brothers and friends have been delighting audiences with their music almost all over the world and building a solid reputation for themselves. Now, with the help of tourmates Alice Donut, they

hope to conquer the sullen Eastern Seaboard and show all of the young pups exactly who's boss.

NOMEANSNO, for those who have never seen them, do have a somewhat, um, mature perspective of the world. That's not to say that they're (now how did he put it...) "so fuckin' ancient." It did, however, come up that Rob could in theory be the father of a lot of his audience or even of bandmate Ken Kempster. His brother John and guitarist Tom Holliston are somewhat younger, though I thought it would be in bad taste to ask for specifics. This perspective lends a quality to the music that is as unique as their age when compared to the rest of the 'rock world.'

Although wonderfully full of youthful ebullience, NOMEANSNO tackles paradoxes that every person faces somewhat after adolescence and before death. As Rob contends, "Growing older doesn't necessarily mean growing up."

Although the lyrics, which often deal with universal problems, could stand on their own, they are meant to be experienced in the context of their music.

When I asked about the poetic nature of a lot of the lyrics, Rob tells me that they are an extension of the mood that shapes the music, and for this reason they are rarely obvious. I suppose this is not too surprising for someone who loves the works of James Joyce.

Rob's lyrics are not always obviously rational, because, as he explains, "life has no inherent rationality. Rationality is a tool like opposable thumbs... It has managed to get us to some great places, but still can't provide all of the answers. The song 0+2=1 is about this."

Another recurrent theme in a lot of the band's songs is the conflict between the society and the individual (See, it isn't just a University theme.) "The highest expression of society is the individual. The taste of coffee first thing in the morning or the wind in your hair is the individuality."

Seriousness aside, NOMEANSNO proves that you don't have to have flaky songs about insubstantial subjects to make enjoyable music. Nor does it mean that the music can only elicit feelings of angst or unease if it deals with serious topics. For a great juxtaposition in emotional content, compare the song "Dad" from the album *Sex Mad* with "Lullaby" from *Why Do They Call Me Mr. Happy*: from absolute terror to peaceful elation. Wow.

If all had gone well, this week would have marked the release of yet another full-length album of new material. However, running true to some sort of greater order, the release had to be postponed due to a screw-

up with the cassette format.

Unfortunately, the only chance Montréal had to hear the new material was at Saturday's performance at Café Campus. All of the discs that they had were bought by greedy Toronto denizens, as ever oblivious of the needs of the rest of the country (Dig, dig.).

Having heard the new stuff, we all now have to wait three to four weeks to get hold of some. Tap. Tap. Tap.

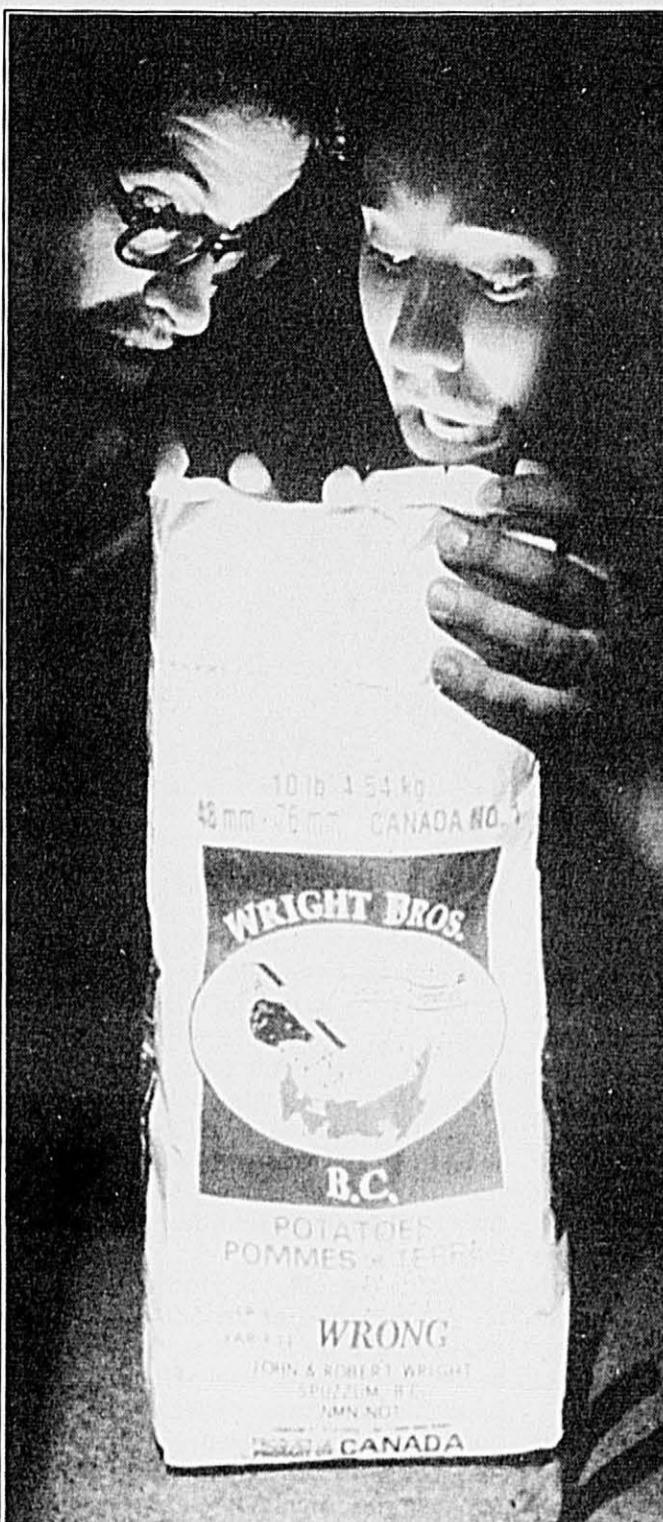
Rob assures us that it is the same good stuff, only better. The 'only so many songs can be sung with two lips, two lungs and one tongue' phenomenon doesn't bother them too much: "How often do you get sick of bacon and eggs for breakfast?" Somehow I don't think the new album will be at all mundane.

Saturday was a performance that will rank in my fond memories for a long time. Besides having the honour of sharing the stage with Alice Donut and (the amazing) UltraBidé, Rob held up to his adage about growing old (that growing old mustn't have a lot

to do with 'growing up') by performing with more energy, youthfulness and sheer joy of being on stage than most bands I've seen recently.

They even played a disco version of "Big Dick" as a second encore in honour of the dance crowd that was anxiously waiting to get inside.

"Music is substance, a powerful medium, something of real value, which can have a powerful healing effect." Shaman Rob once again managed to create an evening of almost religious intensity, but his whose message is not to proselytise new followers (Only sheep need a leader.) or to offer direct answers ("I really believe all these things I say to you, it's just that none of them are true" - Mr. Happy), but to communicate honest emotion.



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Looking sharp, sounding ...

MENSWE@R at Club Soda

by Kevin Siu

The British press is notorious for creating scenes: witness Madchester, shoegazing, the New Wave of the New Wave and New Mod. Overnight, pop groups are transformed into the latest sensation, often simply because they had the right look in the right place at the right time. When the scene has collapsed, some sink into obscurity while others come back, though perhaps not immediately (Blur, The Charlantes). It's a funny phenomenon, but by no means a recent one.

Whatever can be said about the U.K. music industry, at least any unknown hopeful with stars in his/her eyes can become the



next big thing. Six months ago, Menswear were unknown hopefuls in the U.K. Now, with only two singles under their belt, they've made the cover of *Select*, played both the Reading and Glastonbury festivals, and been voted the most popular band in Japan. The appeal is obvious - they dress smartly, they speak wittily, and they've each got their own unique personality: Johnny the arrogant one, Stuart the drunk one, Chris the young one, Simon the enthusiastic one, and Matt the sensible one. If only the Beatles had been so cool.

Now, Menswear have a more daunting task than becoming famous: staying famous. The kids like them, but, ironically, the same media machine that built them up is threatening to plot their downfall. Their debut album, *Nuisance*, is to be released in the U.K. in two weeks and in North America two weeks later. In every way, the success of the album, critically and commercially, in the U.K. and overseas, will determine Menswear's future. It is under these circumstances that Menswear visit North America for the first time.

"We just want people, really, to listen to the music and ignore the hype," drummer Matt ("the sensible one") explains, describing the new album track by track. According to Matt, *Nuisance* holds something for everyone: full orchestras, sing-along choruses, jerky guitars and songs about bloated pop star egos.

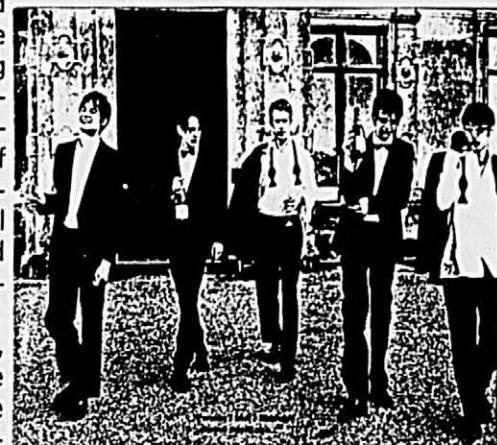
Their Montréal debut, then,

is eagerly anticipated. And, when they take the stage, there is a mixed hush of awe and skepticism. Do they deliver the goods?

There are, for sure, a couple of neat tunes ("Sleeping In" comes to mind). But Menswear are just okay and under these circumstances, being just okay isn't enough. The headliners, the Charlantes, are as tight and unfluffed as one would expect veterans of the U.K. scene-making machine to be. Menswear, still only initiates in the temple of Lady Luck, are too inexperienced to deal with a blasé crowd and the weight of expectations.

Unfortunately, Menswear (and the British press) have captured our imaginations and raised

our hopes before we were given the chance to hear their music. Right now, they can never be as good as we'd like and it is for this reason that their performance is ultimately unsatisfying. Yet, one hopes that the album will surprise and allow Menswear to look cool. This is your opportunity, Menswear: don't fade away.



CD REVIEWS

Blur — The Great Escape

"Graham, could you tell me what I should call Blur and their new album?"

"hm... (long pause)... 90s comic neurotica... that should be alright."

Now it is viewed as cool to be a pop band in England and many new pop groups arise and compete with the wish to be number one. But there can be only one winner and Blur has proved to be it.

Blur brought their single, *Country House*, released this August, to number one on the UK chart and their newly released fourth album, *The Great Escape*, has also been overwhelmingly welcomed. But the question awaits: will their victory be repeated in North America?

The Great Escape is less English and less uproarious but more harmonious and more straightforward than their previous albums. Guitarist Graham gives his opinion about this album compared to *Parklife*: "It is more depressed first, and a lot of music is quite personal and emotional. The characters seem unsatisfied with the surroundings and life. (...) The last album (*Parklife*) was very English and people [in North America] didn't really understand it."

Blur's brand of Britpop is not so familiar at a first listen. But when you play it again, its great strengths are exposed. *The Great Escape* is not only a natural progression but a reflection of the significant personal and musical growth of the band. The themes evolve around normal day-to-

day life and the unsatisfied characters trying to escape it, to get out from where they are and the situations they find themselves in.

Get melancholy walking down Soho with a night shift worker on "Best Days" as Graham's acoustic and electric guitar solo with Damon's wistful voice intertwine beautifully.

Pity the lovers who cannot be together in the love ballad "Yuko & Hiro" (featuring a chorus by a female Japanese singer). The lovers work in the same company, but ironically, they work so hard that they have no time to see each other.

Observe the absurdity of routinism of Ernold Same, a businessman whose *Today will always be tomorrow*. Even if you feel like escaping, it's impossible in (my favourite) "He Thought Of Cars" because the sky and the road are fully booked in this over-populated planet. Graham's guitar is epic, mad and quite American.

And if you like "This Is A Low" from *Parklife*, you will find "The Universal" as extraordinary, both lyrically and musically: *When the days seem to fall straight through you. — Then, what do you do? — Let them go.*

Musically, *The Great Escape* is full of variety, ranging

from punk to waltz, to easy pop. It's no wonder why Blur is so huge in the UK and is becoming more popular internationally.

Now ask Graham what he thinks of his fame and fortune: "First, you don't get to see your girlfriend very much and sometimes I'd like to go out shopping and I can't," he says mournfully. "There're a lot of crappy newspapers...but mostly it's okay. It's nice to be liked by people and to have your music appreciated. But fame is a funny thing; I don't really know what it is actually." At this point, I almost encouraged Graham to escape, but it wouldn't be a good idea, would it?

The Great Escape is left to your own interpretations. But for Blur, this album is probably a way of escape — a way of taking them out of themselves — and maybe this is why they give so much to it.

- Vorravit Siripark

FROM WITHIN - A CANADIAN COMPILATION CD featuring:

Lorna Crozier, Mervyn Cadell, Kate & Anna McGarrigle, Evelyn Lau, Suzanne Little, Crash Vegas, Veda Hille, Sarah McLachlan, Lynn Crosbie, Taste Of Joy, Tara MacLean, Mae Moore & Kristy Thirkle.

*he keeps pictures of you in his drawer
your artificial hair whipping against the camera
your model's pout damp with hunger
your eyes like tombstones, black and white.*
- Evelyn Lau, from "Nineteen"

You can't play this and not listen to women's voices, clear and poignant. The music is soft and slow, not really powerful enough to distract from what is being sung or said. Which makes sense, given the "common cause" of this compilation CD, namely to fight sexual violence against women.

Produced in Vancouver at Nettwerk Records, all net profits from the CD will go to sexual assault centres across Canada (including our own in Montréal). The idea came from Tonni Maruyama, a Nettwerk employee who picked up a woman from the side of the road who was a recent survivor of sexual violence. Maruyama was so affected by the experience that she initiated this project.

She contacted various female Canadian performance artists and they personally chose the songs they felt were appropriate. Some of the songs, like the cover of "Songbird" by Kristy Thirkle of

Rose Chronicles, were produced especially for the CD. The spoken word pieces, in particular those by Veda Hille and Lorna Crozier, struck me with their personal testimonies. Other tracks are soothing though less original.

The soft pop sound, with the sensitive and serious tone of female voices singing and speaking of "him" is a familiar genre. Here, "he" is spoken of with sarcasm, hope, confusion and whimsical humour. Part of the experience of being a woman is learning how "he" fits into our daily lives - painfully, often. Some of the tracks are specifically about sexual violence: Lorna Crozier speaks about "Larry, the one who touched the inside of my legs on the swing, an older boy we knew we shouldn't get close to with our little dresses, our soft skin." Other tracks touch on related issues: the male gaze and the objectification of women's bodies, psychological abuse, sexual identities and emotional endurance. Veda Hille wonders "Were I his, wouldn't I have to straighten my lines, legibilise my script, write him into a room already full?"

Exploring new musical structures doesn't seem to be the point here. Making something accessible, especially for women, probably is the goal, and the disc succeeds. But some of us are into that Sarah McLachlan genre, and some of us are not. If you are, you won't be disappointed with this compilation.

- Steph Dutrizac



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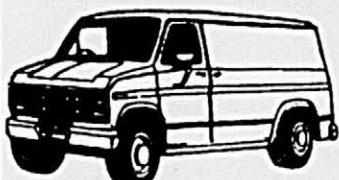
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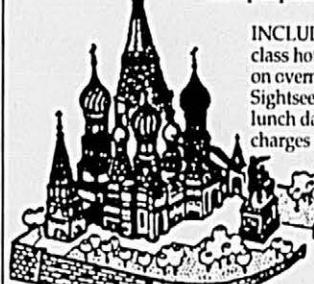
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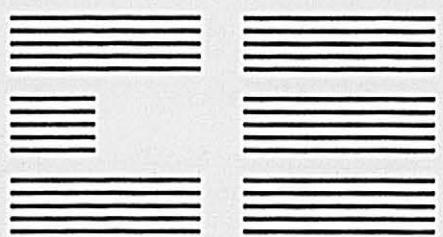
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